

THE LIFTING OF GOVARDHANA HILL (#1)

from *Krishna Book*, Chapters 24 - 27

* * * * *

CAST: Krishna, Nanda Maharaja, Mother Yashoda, Indra, Brihaspati, 2 Doormen, Servant, Apsara, Cowherd Men, Cowherd Boys.

SCENE ONE

(Preparations for a fire sacrifice in Vrindavan; everyone is very busy)

Krishna: Baba, what sacrifice are you getting ready for? Who is getting all these offerings? Are you expecting some special reward from doing it? Please tell Me what this sacrifice is for.

Nanda: O Krishna, You're only seven years old. Just a little boy. This business of demigod worship is too complicated. I don't think You'd understand.

Krishna: Please don't keep secrets from Me, Baba. I'm not an outsider. I'm your son. Tell Me what you and the other cowherd men are doing.

Nanda: Well, we're getting ready to do *puja*. We are going to make a sacrifice to Indradeva, the demigod who sends us the rain. When the sacrifice begins, You can come and sit by me to watch how it's done.

Krishna: Father, can you tell me more about it? Everyone is working hard to gain something, but if they understand their work, and why they are working, they achieve success. People who work in ignorance are ultimately failures. Therefore, I should know all about this *puja* so everything will be successful. Tell Me, is it a Vedic sacrifice or just a popular ceremony?

Nanda: All right, all right. I'm not sure You will understand everything, but there is no harm in telling You. We are not the only ones who worship Lord Indra. Because he is the lord and master of the rain-giving clouds, it is traditional to worship him in order to thank him for sending rainfall. Without rainfall, we cannot farm or produce grains. We would not have any fruits or vegetables, and the cows would not have fresh grass to eat. They would not be able to produce any milk. We couldn't live if there was no rain. Anyone who does not perform this Indra Puja out of lust, enmity, fear or greed will never have any good fortune.

Krishna:(to Himself) Hmmm. This is not good. One of the reasons that I descended to this world is to make sure that human beings are living under religious principles. It is clear to Me now that there is danger that people will become confused, thinking that there are many

different gods. I send these demigods forth at the beginning of creation, and they manage the material world for Me, but now I see how people are mistaking them to be all-in-all. What is worse, the demigods may take themselves to be all-in-all. That Indradeva, although only an officer under my command, is getting a little puffed-up. He is forgetting his Master. It seems that the time has come to teach him a lesson!

SCENE TWO

(Fade out Vrindavan music, now celestial party noises, music, voices, etc. in Indra's palace)

Doorman 1: Chief of the demigods, Indradeva *ki* **(everyone, ¶Jai!¶)**

Doorman 2: Lord of the celestial kingdom, Indradeva *ki* **(everyone, ¶Jai!¶)**

Brihaspati: Greetings, Indra. Quite a gathering!

Indra: Ah, my Lord Brihaspati, please accept my respects. Yes, half the heavens must be here today. Well, there's occasion to celebrate. My kingdom is secure and I am happy. And who wouldn't be, in my position, eh? I occupy a throne of power...

Brihaspati: (cuts him off) Which you must always fight to keep and are forever in anxiety about losing!

Indra: Ah, don't be concerned. I have conquered all my enemies, the demons are beaten and running. Running! I tell you, Brihaspati, when I go forth into battle on the back of my elephant, Airavata, my thunderbolt in my hand...

Brihaspati: (cuts him off again) Yes, yes, you feel supreme. Well, you're not! Although you're sitting on a high seat, Indra, beneath a canopy as brilliant as the moon, served by heavenly maidens and demigods and praised by the sweetest singers in the cosmos ¶ your opulence is only a hint of Sri Krishna's. You may be God's right-hand man, Indra, but you're not God!

Indra: (thoughtful but undaunted) I know it's your duty as my spiritual master to take my ego down a bit from time to time. Must be a difficult task keeping the king of heaven's feet on the ground, eh?

Apsara: More *soma*, my lords?

Indra: Yes, yes. Ah, *soma!* My guests came from all over the three planetary systems to taste this wonderful drink. They perform sacrifices, they perform austerities, just to come and drink the *soma-rasa* with us in our celestial city of gold!

Brihaspati: Indra, I don't think you're listening to a word I say today! I'm trying to help you out. You can't see it, but you're heading for a fall!

Indra: I'm sorry, Gurudeva. I... I'm a little intoxicated.

Brihaspati: You're very intoxicated ☐ with pride! Well, I'll tell you this, my son: one day soon you'll bow down before Lord Krishna, and that magnificent crown on your head will touch His lotus feet. That will be your supreme moment ☐ not this!

SCENE THREE

Sacrificial arena in Vrindavan)

Krishna: Father I don't think that we should perform a sacrifice for Lord Indra.

Several Men: What? What are You saying?

Krishna: It's so temporary. We perform the sacrifice now, Indra is pleased and sends rain. Then we'll just have to start all over. Next year, at the beginning of the growing season, we will have to go to so much trouble all over again, making another puja for more rain! Since there is so much business that has to be done in this life, an intelligent person isn't interested in blessings that simply come and go. Actually it is by the force of *karma* that a living entity takes birth and dies. It is *karma* that gives him happiness, distress, fear and fearlessness. Since Lord Indra cannot in any way change our destiny, why should we worship him? It is actually *karma* which controls everyone. Therefore, one should seriously worship work itself. Actually that by which we may live nicely is really our worshipable Deity.

Gopa 1: But Nanda-nandana, one has to fulfill his responsibilities.

Krishna: That is true; but all of these gods are just order-carriers of the Supreme God. He is the Supersoul in the heart of men and demigods. Man may forget that everything belongs to God, but the demigods should not. Before they send anybody anything, they have to have the Lord's permission. If they do not have it, they cannot benedict anyone.

Nanda: Well, I can see what You're saying, son, and I'm sure You're quite right, but, well, I just don't know what to say. We've always done this Indra Puja. We do the sacrifice, Indra sends the rain. It's a good system.

Krishna: Yes, but human life has to have a higher aim. Indra is pouring water on the ocean as well as the land. Rain does not depend on worshiping him. And just see ☐ if you do not worship him, he is powerless to benedict you. He is waiting for his *puja*, only then can he send rain. If you just do your duties nicely, you will get the results of sacrifice anyway. If one thing is actually sustaining our life, but we take shelter of something else, how can we achieve any real benefit? We would be like an unfaithful woman, who can never achieve any actual benefit by consorting with her paramour.

Gopa 2: It seems logical...

Gopa 1: The boy has a point, Nandaraja...

Nanda: Hmmm, yes, I suppose it's true.

Krishna: Baba, we are *vaishyas*. Our duties are in four divisions: farming, commerce, cow protection and money lending. Out of these, we as a community are always engaged in cow protection. Our home is not in the cities or towns or villages. Being forest dwellers, we always live in the forest and on the hills. Therefore, we should make a sacrifice to satisfy the local *brahmanas* of Vrindavan, the pasturing ground of Govardhana Hill and our wonderful cows.

Gopa 2: That is a very good idea, Krishna, and since You feel so strongly about it, we'll make a separate sacrifice as You say, but later, after the Indra sacrifice.

Krishna: No, father! Don't wait for anything. The sacrifice for the *brahmanas* and Govardhana Hill will take too long to prepare. Better take all the things you have already gotten together for the Indra Puja and use them for the Govardhana Puja.

Nanda: (laughing) Krishna, I think You could wheedle the mangos off the trees. You seem so enthusiastic about this idea, and since Your pleasure is my pleasure, we will perform the sacrifice just as You say.

Gopa 1: Just tell us how You want the ceremony done.

Gopa 2: What do we need?

Krishna: Let's prepare many different kinds of food from sweet rice to vegetable soups. Many kinds of fancy cakes, both baked and fried, should be prepared. And all the available milk products should be taken for this sacrifice. Invite the learned *brahmanas* who can chant the Vedic hymns and offer oblations to the fire. The *brahmanas* should be given all kinds of grains. Then the cows should be decorated and given nice grasses. The lower animals, such as the dogs, and the lower grades of people, who are considered untouchable, like the *chandalas*, should also be given sumptuous *prasad*. Then the sacrifice to Govardhana may immediately begin. This sacrifice will greatly please Me.

SCENE FOUR

(end Vrindavan music; begin demonic music in Indra's palace)

Indra: They what?! I don't believe it! How dare they?! Just see the impudence of these cowherds of Vrindavan! They are nothing but inhabitants of the forest, but being infatuated with their prosperity they have surrendered to an ordinary human being, Krishna, and thus they have offended the gods! These cowherd men of Vraja have to suffer the consequences! Send the Samvartaka Cloud to me!

Servant: My Lord? This cloud is most powerful! It will flood the entire cosmos! There are many less destructive clouds that can certainly terrorize the residents of Vrindavan! Wouldn't that be sufficient? We don't really need to destroy everything, do we?

Indra: I said send the Samvartaka Cloud! The people of Vrindavan have become too puffed-up over their comfort and riches, and are too confident in the presence of their tiny friend, Krishna. He is simply talkative, childish, and ignorant of the complete situation, although He is thinking Himself very advanced in knowledge. Samvartaka! **(cloud responds with loud thunder and lightning)** I am ordering you and your companions to go and inundate Vrindavan. Everyone there should be destroyed, along with their cows. **(clouds show fear)** Do you mean you are afraid to carry out these orders? You shall go, and I will go also, riding on my elephant with great storms before, behind and on either side of me. And I shall use all my strength to punish these Vraja-vasis!

SCENE FIVE

(loud sounds of rain and lightning in Vrindavan)

Woman's voice: (shouting over the storm) Children, come here □ take my hands, hurry!

Man's voice: (shouting) Help! Bring the cows over here, everyone!

Man and woman together: (shouting over wind) Dear Krishna, You are the all-powerful one, and You are very affectionate to Your devotees. Now, please protect us from the wrath of Indra!

Krishna:(to Himself) This demigod who thinks himself supreme has shown his great power, but now I shall answer him according to My position! He is maddened with false prestige, but now I will break his pride. I will protect My pure devotees of Vrindavan, who are completely under My protection. **(Krishna picks up the hill)** My dear mother and father, dear residents of Vrindavan, if you wish, you may now come under this hill with your cows. You do not have to fear that this mountain will fall from My hand. Don't be afraid of the wind and rain, for your deliverance from these afflictions has already been arranged.

Mother Yashoda: Son, you are in such a dangerous position. How can I help you? Each time I try to call to you with some instruction, my voice becomes choked with anxiety. O Krishna, my Krishna. **(turning to cowherd men)** Please, please! Try to help Him! He is too small to hold this huge hill all by Himself! **(Nanda**

and Upananda raise their canes to help hold up the hill)

Cowherd boy: (walking up and kneeling near Krishna) My dear friend, You have been standing there for the last seven days and nights without any rest. All of us think that You are trying to do something that is just too hard for You to do. We don't think You should have to stand alone holding up this heavy mountain any more. You should transfer it into Sudama's hand. If you are afraid that Sudama can't support the hill, then at least change hands. Transfer the hill to Your right hand and we will give Your left hand a massage.

(song □We're not hungry, we're not thirsty...□)

Indra: I was foolish to challenge the power of Krishna. What have I done? Clouds! Clouds! Stop! Let's leave immediately. We have caused enough trouble already.

Krishna:My dear cowherd men, now you can now go back to your homes with your wives, children, cows and valuables. The inundation has ended and the swollen rivers have returned to normal.

SCENE SIX

(Lord Indra enters with his elephant and humbly approaches Krishna, who is standing with a cow)

Indra: My dear Lord. You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead. I offer my respectful obeisance's unto You because You are the Supreme Soul of all living beings. Please accept my prostrate obeisances. My dear Lord, I committed a great offense unto Your lotus feet, being falsely proud of my material opulence and unaware of Your unlimited power. Therefore, my Lord, kindly excuse me, because I am fool number one.

Krishna:My dear Indra, I have stopped your sacrifice just to show My causeless mercy and to revive your memory that I am your eternal master. I am not only your eternal master, but I am the master of all the other demigods as well. You should always remember that all your material opulences are due to My mercy. Everyone should always remember that I am the Supreme Lord. I can show anyone My favor, and I can chastise anyone, because no one is superior to Me. If I find someone overpowered by false pride, in order to show Him my causeless mercy, I withdraw all his opulences.

(song □Indra tried to show his power...□)

The End